

Gift Sunday.

(Dyson Hague in 'Parish and Home.')

What is gift Sunday?

Well, it is one of the most delightful and helpful things, not only a pleasure but a blessing. On the Sunday nearest to Christmas, before or after, the scholars of the Sunday-school, boys and girls, infants and Bible classes, and teachers alike, all come, bringing in their hands a gift, and the gifts are brought up and piled on the platform on the superintendent's table, an eye-gladdening and heart-cheering mass, to be afterwards taken and distributed amongst the home poor and needy; or, what is better, sent to some mission in the remote parts of our diocese to cheer and help them at Christmas time.

Now, the basis of this happy institution is two-fold. First: The thought that a very large number of our weaker and poorer schools can be brightened and helped by a little Christmas effort on the part of schools better off. Second: The idea that a vast majority of our Sunday-school scholars have come to that time when it is of the highest importance for them to learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

One of the best things about Gift Sunday is the way it takes.

In my parish, St. Paul's, Halifax, it was from the very first attempt a perfect success.

We had a very large number of poor children, a very large number, and it was thought by the most timid that the poorer ones might feel it very much if all the others were bringing presents and they could not; but we found to our surprise that the very poorest even were able to bring some little article, and that in many cases their gift was better than that of one better off. Well do I remember from year to year that happy day. 'Next Sunday,' the rector announced, 'next Sunday will be Gift Sunday. The teachers and scholars are requested to bring their presents to the Sunday-school at three o'clock.' And at three o'clock you should have seen the Sunday-school.

There was a little girl hugging a flax-haired doll in her arms, while her sister dragged along a little doll's carriage.

There was a boy with a big jumping-jack, while his little comrade was carrying a wooden horse. There was a sixteen-year-old girl, looking rather ashamed of the large parcel she half concealed under her arm, which looked suspiciously like a big Noah's ark, and a fair-haired teacher, who held in her hand a box of halma. Some were dragging carts along, others wheeling doll perambulators. But all were happy and all most orderly.

And now the bell sounds. The hymn is given out, then all is hushed in solemn awe in prayer. The sweet story of Matt. ii. 1-11 is read: 'And when they were come into the house they saw the young child, and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts.'

Then, one by one, beginning with the youngest, all came up, bearing their little gifts, which are laid upon the table on the platform. Higher and higher the pile begins to grow. Dolls and toy horses, jumping-jacks, balls and tops, and games in every conceivable variety. The teachers and Bible class scholars bring in their offerings of books, story books, Prayer books, Testaments and Bibles.

At last the happy work is ended; a brief address is given, a hymn is sung, and all go home, feeling, indeed, how true it is, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Then on the morrow a little busy band come and sort the various articles, and four large packing cases are filled with books and toys, which the ship or the boat soon bears away

to some distant rural mission or parish to gladden the hearts of the Sunday-school children there.

Gift Sunday!

Could not all the town and city parish churches practice this happy plan each Christmas season? Try it once, and you will, I am sure, try it always.

Try it, and you, too, will perhaps appreciate the gladness and the joy that comes each year to the boys and girls and teachers of St. Paul's Church, Halifax.

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Theatre-Going.

REASONS THAT APPLY TO ALL DOUBTFUL AMUSEMENTS.

(By F. B. Meyer.)

I was asked the other day to give my opinion about theatres and theatre-going. I suppose if I were to deal with that question I should be asked my opinion about joining in a country dance, of reading novels, and of wearing ornaments. Our minds so easily drift into questionings, the solution of which we like to have given patly and concisely by someone whose opinion we have come to respect. But in this way we are deprived of the benefits of that soul-discipline and training which are beyond price. That is, you cannot buy them ready-made from any one else; you have to acquire them from the teaching of God in your life.

Instead, therefore, of giving my sentence on these questions, it seems wiser to urge all those who are in perplexity to ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?'

Let us see how this will work out with respect to the theatre. Supposing you are really anxious to know God's will, you may argue the matter out on paper. Drawing a line down the middle, you may place on the one side all the reasons for going, and on the other those that make against it.

FOR GOING.

One may learn lessons that may help to mould character and conduct.

I have a taste for the drama.

I do not wish to appear singular.

Many professing Christians go.

It seems to me a part of a liberal education.

It is surely a stronger method of life to go to these places, and resist the evil, than to abstain from going for fear of contracting evil influences.

FOR ABSTAINING FROM GOING.

Theatre-going is inimical to a close walk with God, for the mind is too excited and dazzled to be able to settle to the evening and morning prayer.

Theatre-going is avowedly one of the chief amusements of worldly people, and surely it cannot be a pastime for one who has been redeemed out of this world, for the service and possession of Christ.

Theatre-going brings its devotees into close contact with some of the worst people in all the great cities and towns, who congregate there; and the contact is sought in the way of pleasure; and not of business, or desire to save them. Surely such fellowship must come under the injunction, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.'

Theatre-going helps to maintain a system which is inimical to the best interests of those who are employed on the stage, as is proved by abundant testimony of those who have gone through the fire.

Theatre-going on the part of a Christian will set an evil example to those who are

undecided and hesitating, and who may be led much further than the Christian who first set the example was prepared to go.

Theatre-going exposes the soul to the spirit of voluptuousness, the excitement and stimulation of our sensuous nature; and in some cases suggestions are made which stir thoughts and passions that had best be left dormant.

Such are some of the reasonings which I suppose some of my fellow Endeavorers would pen on either side of their paper. There may be others which have not occurred to me, but these will suffice. Now give a numerical value to each of them, weigh these and assign some numeral for their value, then ask solemnly and prayerfully, 'What would Jesus like to have me do?'

It is not necessary to argue whether or not a theatre may be kept pure, nor to contend for an ideal theatre, nor to quote names of authorities on this side or that. All this is beside the mark. We have taken the pledge and made the promise to abide in all things by the good pleasure and will of Jesus Christ. If he is not satisfied, it matters little what else may be said. The soldier is not expected to reason or argue or advance his own opinions, but to abide by his captain's orders; and if, at times, there is no specific charge as to his method of action, then it is for him to consider what the captain would be likeliest to demand, what may fairly be deduced from all that he has said and ordained in the past. But always and everywhere the soldier must not entangle himself with the cares and riches and pleasures of this world, lest they choke the word that it become unfruitful, and he displease him who chose him to be a soldier. —Christian Endeavor World.

Class Use Of a Geography.

An intermediate teacher, whose class is in the main room, always carries his geography to Sunday-school. His idea is 'to indelibly locate the map of Palestine in the minds of his class, and to brush away all doubts about the reality of its present existence.' The geography supplies the missing link between the maps in the Bible or lesson helps, and those of the secular schoolroom. Almost any plan which clears away the multitude of popular misconceptions of biblical geography would seem to be well worth trying. —Sunday School Times.

Premiums.

A good many have already started to work for premiums. Have you? The premiums are generous. New subscribers are easily secured. But the subscription time is at its height just now. Better get to work.

A Compliment From Ottawa

'Perhaps,' says the Ottawa 'Journal,' 'one hardly goes too far in saying that no other newspaper in this country, even it may be on this continent, has been conducted from the beginning with more resolute honesty, independence, and desire to be just and right than the Montreal 'Witness.' The success of the paper is an evidence of the fact that character counts for success in journalism. The paper has always refused advertisements of theatres, hotels, operas, lotteries, doubtful medical schemes, and other announcements which usually pay well. In its career it has been excommunicated, or at least placed under the ban, by the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of the keenest competition the 'Witness' has prospered steadily, nor is it too much to say that the mainspring of its prosperity has been public confidence in its motives and character.' 'Daily Witness,' \$3.00. 'Weekly Witness,' \$1.00.

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